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ABSTRACT

This article presents a new model for viewing and implementing balance in the lives of higher education administrators derived from a review of the educational, psychological, and management literature. Rejecting the traditional, two dimensional model for balancing work with the rest of life, the new model envisions four concentric circles of interactive life dimensions: values, renewal, life roles and context. The inner circle of the model contains the personal values which govern an individual's life. The second circle consists of inner dimensions: areas of personal renewal including the emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual, physical and occupational aspects. The third circle of the model moves to external dimensions, to involvement and participation in the world. In this category are the roles administrators play as they implement their values and allot time and energy for areas of renewal including the roles of parent, spouse, friend, citizen, leisurite, learner, son or daughter, homemaker, and worker. The final circle is the context in which the administrator exercises his or her role including gender identity, racial or ethnic identity, socioeconomic conditions, educational background, family background and structure and work place factors. Integrating these dimensions can balance an administrator's life. Includes 34 references. (JB)

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DIMENSIONS OF BALANCE IN AN ADMINISTRATOR'S LIFE

BY JOHN W. CRESWELL, BETTE J. OLSON, AND JODY DONOVAN

Work, play, family, friends—these are the things that matter. This is what we have forgotten—the simplest things.
—Awakenings, Columbia Pictures, 1990

Effective college and university administrators must continually renew and develop themselves. This self-development involves recognizing the signs and symptoms of imbalance. Everyone knows administrators who feel they work too hard and have wrong priorities, get clues from significant others that they are not spending enough time with them, and subordinate all aspects of their life to their work (Urbom 1991)—and they display the physical, emotional, and behavioral signs of stress (May and McBeath 1990). Terms like "burnout," "fatigue," and "out of control" aptly express their behavior. Recent years have seen a proliferation of literature, workshops, and seminars on time management, stress management, and assertiveness—all attempts to help individuals address these behaviors and manage multiple demands and activities. Yet administrators still struggle with balance.

The authors first became curious about the term "balance" when middle-level academic administrators mentioned it several times during a recent study of 200 academic chairs—individuals recommended on 70 campuses for "excellence" in supporting and assisting faculty (Creswell et al. 1990). The chairs said that the most balanced administrators were those who protected time for their families, set aside time for personal needs, engaged in physical activities as a mental break, and coordinated aspects of their personal and professional lives. Specifically, they used strategies that:

- Put time for family and friends on their calendars;
- Took time to mark important personal and family events; and
- Took vacation time.

They did *not* act like martyrs for taking time off.

Several business and management studies also address the concept. According to the literature, four factors are deemed necessary for leaders to be balanced: security (a sense of worth), guidance (a source of direction), wisdom (a perspective on life), and power (the capacity to act and make choices) (Covey 1989). Corporate executives describe balance as the kinds of examining, reevaluating, and ordering of priorities that managers experience in balancing their work and personal life (Van Velsor and Hughes 1990).

How, then, might college and university administrators view and implement balance in their lives? Because the readings on higher education leadership do not directly address the subject of balance, the authors designed their own model, drawing on the combined educational, psychological, and management literature. They began with findings from a traditional model of balancing work against everything else in life and

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"Creating balance requires an integration of a person's total life and all *of life's activities . . . "*

broadened the perspective to a newer model based on the interactive dimensions of values, renewal, life roles, and context.

Work versus Everything Else

Writers commonly describe balance as two-dimensional: work versus everything else. The metaphor of a teeter-totter has been used, with work on one end and family, personal life, friends, and so forth on the other (Bellman 1990). Several images can be envisioned for the appropriate balance of this teeter-totter: one precisely balanced, another one weighted down on one end with work, another weighted down on one end with play or friends or some other dimension of life. When executives in one study were asked how they spent their time, they mentioned hours devoted to work and hours devoted to life outside work (Bartolome and Evans 1980); a common factor among executives was the balance between work and family (Nelson, Quick, and Quick 1989) and the impact of a job's demands on home and family life (Burke 1982). Time management specialists emphasize individuals' becoming more effective and efficient at work to be able to do more at work, rather than using the "extra time" for the fulfillment of personal needs (Blanchard and Johnson 1981).

After an exploration of the literature on values clarification, wellness, development, and careers, a multidimensional model seemed better suited to the busy schedules of college administrators. Undoubtedly the work ethic is a primary base for life in our society (Edman 1977; Provost 1990), especially for males caught in an orientation toward achievement (Levinson et al. 1978). But an overemphasis on work can be counterproductive and even at odds with family life (Forrest and Mikolaitis 1986); such an emphasis runs the risk of relegating social and family relationships to "background factors . . . responsive and subordinate to work" (Kahn 1984, p. 146). Creating balance requires an integration of a person's total life and *all* of life's activities (Csikszentmihalyi 1990; Sonnenfeld and Kotter 1982).

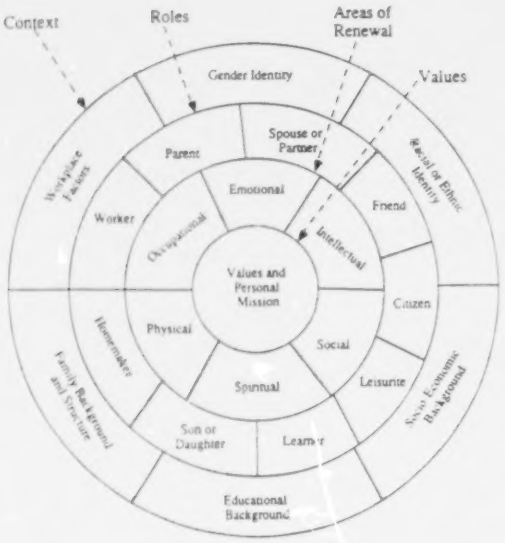
With this perspective, the authors developed a multidimensional model of what factors administrators might balance that includes more than work versus everything else (see figure 1). Rather than a teeter-totter, this model envisions a web of four concentric circles. The inner two circles reflect inner dimensions of an individual's life: (1) values and personal mission and (2) areas of renewal. The outer two circles display outer dimensions: (3) roles one plays and (4) the context within which one lives. All four dimensions must be balanced, a challenge for a busy administrator. Furthermore, the dimensions interrelate: Changes or developments in any circle of the web influence and are influenced by changes or developments in other circles. The circles build outward; that is, inner circles are encompassed into outer circles. And the circles can be rotated so that, at any one time, the circles can be aligned differently in our lives. Achieving balance, then, means recognizing that four dimensions exist in our lives and that we act out all four dimensions and engage in specific aspects of each dimension.

Values and Personal Mission

The core dimension, the inner circle of the model, consists of personal values and personal mission. Determining the values that govern one's life and designing a mission that operates from those values serve as

FIGURE 1

Dimensions of Balance



"Unfortunately, writers talk more about creating a vision for an administrative unit than a vision for administrators."

the base—the cornerstone—for creating a balanced life-style.

Ask yourself these questions (Smith 1977): What is life all about? Where do I fit in? How can I find meaning? Imagine your ideal self. What do you really want? What do you care about most? What values are inherent in your ideal self? What do you care most about in your administrative role?

Clarifying personal values involves an understanding and vision of self (Kirschenbaum 1977). Unfortunately, writers talk more about creating a vision for an administrative unit (Bennis and Nanus 1985) than a vision for administrators. To be highly effective, we must work toward personal congruency. We must first "possess self"; that is, we must understand our own self-worth before sharing ourselves with others (Creswell et al. 1990). We must make and keep promises to self before we can make and keep promises to others (Covey 1989).

Recent writers refer to developing a "self-paradigm": how we see ourselves and self-awareness (Covey 1989; Garfield 1986; Kotter 1988). They stress the importance of developing a personal mission, a mission that focuses on what one wants to be and do and the values or principles upon which being and doing are based. This concept could be applied to an activity in which administrators set their goals. The next time you write your yearly goals, include a personal mission statement about what you want to be and your values. Then relate them to your unit and your institutional goals. By identifying personal goals, administrators can focus their mission, correct their course when they get off track, and keep perspective in the best and worst of times (Garfield 1986). Understanding our values allows us to be proactive leaders: "Proactive people are driven by values, carefully thought about, selected, and internalized values" (Covey 1989, p. 72).

Areas of Renewal

What activities help renew you? With values as the core, the model of balance moves within the web to the second circle of the inner

dimensions: areas of personal renewal. Various writers identify dimensions of renewal or human needs requiring fulfillment (Brill 1985; Covey 1989; Hettler 1979). Opportunities for renewal can be found in six areas:

- *Emotional*—become more aware and accepting of your feelings; realistically assess your limitations;
- *Intellectual*—engage in creative, stimulating mental activities for yourself and for sharing with others;
- *Social* (family, community, environmental)—contribute to the common welfare of your community;
- *Spiritual* (values, ethics)—seek a deep appreciation for the depth and expanse of life;
- *Physical* (fitness, nutrition)—engage in activities that will maintain cardiovascular flexibility and strength;
- *Occupational* (vocational)—find satisfaction in your work (Hettler 1979).

Each individual might have a personal level of satisfaction for each dimension, yet each dimension must be met at some level. All areas are interrelated: Lack in one area affects fulfillment in all other areas, as renewal in any one dimension positively affects all others. Busy administrators should identify different activities that renew them and provide energy, set aside time for these activities, make them into a daily routine, and tell colleagues and staff about them so that the administrators can set an example for others.

"Busy administrators should identify different activities that renew them and provide energy, set aside time for these activities, make them into a daily routine, . . ."

The Roles One Plays

The third circle of the model moves from inner to external dimensions, to involvement and participation in the world. To what aspects of our external lives do we devote our time and energy? It is in the roles we play that we implement our values and allot the time and energy for areas of renewal.

As administrators balance their roles, they need to pay attention to the quality of each role, how each role is developing, and how they negotiate and balance the various roles. For example, a short list of typical roles in which people spend time and energy might include:

- As a parent in rearing children;
- As a spouse or partner in building and maintaining a relationship with the closest person in your life;
- As a friend in building and maintaining a relationship with the closest person in your life;
- As a citizen in community, church, and civic activities;
- As a leisurite in activity for relaxation, such as tennis, TV, or reading;
- As a learner in acquiring knowledge and skills;
- As a son or daughter in relating to and/or caring for parents;
- As a homemaker by managing and maintaining the place of residence;
- As a worker in paid employment (Super 1980, 1990).

In this list, work is only one of the roles. The roles interact, and the addition of a new role reduces the participation in one or more of the others and could influence the affective commitment to them (Super 1980, 1990). Various roles can be supportive or supplementary,

compensatory, neutral, or conflicting. Roles can enrich life, and they can overburden it.

The qualitative aspects of roles, not just the number of roles occupied or the amount of time allocated to various roles, must be considered (Baruch, Biener, and Barnett 1987). The role as worker has been analyzed for quality in terms of "perfect fit," a concept equally applicable to all roles. This "fit" occurs when one experiences "three positive feelings at the same time—you feel competent, you enjoy the work, and you feel that your work and your moral values coincide" (Bartolome and Evans 1980, p. 142). If any of these three factors are not being met, an individual could experience negative spillover into the rest of one's life; if they are being met, one will experience positive spillover (Bartolome and Evans 1980). Each role should be evaluated in terms of enjoyment, competence, and values, and each role's effect on other roles should be considered. ". . . The spillover effects of satisfactions in various life arenas show that emotions and events in work, family, and in one's life-style have a great effect on the feelings one has about each of the other arenas" (Sonnenfeld and Kotter 1982, p. 32).

Roles are also developmental. Commitment to a role, satisfaction with a role, and selection of activities within individual roles can vary at different developmental stages of one's life. According to Jung's theory of individuation (Provost 1990), individuals develop their dominant personality characteristics in adolescence or early adulthood through the different activities and interests they select. Once those characteristics are developed, usually around midlife or thereafter, individuals might seek out activities that will enhance less developed characteristics of their personality. For example, the activities selected in the leisurite role will likely change at midlife to reflect involvement in less developed dimensions of personality.

An administrator should recognize that life roles can change during the administrative career. How will you apportion your time among the life roles 10 years from now? Will these roles renew you? Be valued in your administrative setting? As you develop yourself professionally, consider how you are learning new roles both within and apart from the workplace.

"An administrator should recognize that life roles can change during the administrative career."

The Context in Which You Work and Live

Completing the model moves to the outer circle of the web—to the external context in which we exercise our roles, our needs for renewal, and our values. A study of administrative balance is not complete without both self and society: "The individual life structure is a patterning of self and world, and interpenetration of self and world" (Levinson et al. 1978, p. 47). We must balance both the development of the individual and the context that affects him or her.

Certain contextual factors need to be balanced:

- *Gender identity*—how one views oneself in relation to gender;
- *Racial or ethnic identity*—how one views oneself in relation to race or ethnicity;
- *Socioeconomic conditions*—social and economic factors affecting one's level of affluence;
- *Educational background*—level of education and the impact on one's future employment;
- *Family background and structure*—type of family environment and

one's experiences; and

- *Factors of the workplace*—pressures of job, time commitments, deadlines.

An individual and the environment in which that individual lives can be strongly influenced by any of these factors plus a host of others. Gender identity, for example, much discussed in the literature, can be a contextual factor related to values, renewal, and life role. It also serves to illustrate not only how contextual influences need to be balanced but also how gender roles are becoming more integrated in the workplace today.

"Considering the argument that we work with a continuum of feminine and masculine (not strictly male or female) anatomy, do your values reflect stereotypic feminine or masculine ethics?"

How does gender affect your values, your personal mission? Male and female conceptions of moral judgment and moral maturity differ (Gilligan 1982). Male development operates from an ethic of justice and rights, while female development operates from an ethic of care and responsibility. Men describe their lives as a drive toward individual achievement and separation (Osherson 1986), while women describe themselves in terms of relationships (Gilligan 1982). Considering the argument that we work with a continuum of feminine and masculine (not strictly male or female) anatomy, do your values reflect stereotypic feminine or masculine ethics? Are you governed by an ethic of care and nurturance, an ethic of justice and individual achievement, or some level of integration of the two?

What are the effects of gender on dimensions of renewal (Emotional, Intellectual, Social, Spiritual, Physical, and Occupational)? Various writers emphasize that our society values some dimensions over others. The rational logic (intellectual) of the "white male system" is valued more highly than the intuitive feelings (emotional) of the "female system" (Schaef 1985). Adhering to stereotypic "systems" can shortchange the individual in some dimensions. The male model of development focuses on self and work, on individual achievement (occupational), often at the expense of relationships (social), which the female model focuses on "others," often at the expense of self (Gilligan 1982). In another area of renewal, the physical dimension, men are much more willing to take time for proper exercise, diet, nutrition, and rest, whereas women continue to focus on others' needs before fulfilling their own (Bird 1986). Are you able to balance the intellectual/emotional dimensions of renewal in your own life? Are you able to balance the occupational/social dimensions? Are you meeting physical needs? Are you limiting your development in any area of renewal because of influences of gender?

Are your roles, the roles in which you live out the dimensions of your life, defined by gender? "The Dream" in the male development model is the vision of achievement that shapes the character and life of the man (Levinson et al. 1978). Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* typifies this "dream" as he lives life seeking success and approval in the eyes of others and finally finds it empty of meaning. A vision like Willy's relegates relationships (spouse, friend, parent, child) to a subordinate role; it creates an identity achieved through work but leaves the individual at a distance from others (Gilligan 1982).

Women, on the other hand, describe themselves in terms of their relationships, depicting their identity in connections with others. In describing themselves, they often do not mention professional or academic activity, see professional activities as jeopardizing self, and might encounter conflict between achievement and care (Gilligan 1982).

The traditional notion that women find their greatest, most "natural" satisfaction in the roles of mother, wife, and homemaker, however, is challenged by studies finding that women involved in multiple roles (including the role of worker) have higher levels of physical and mental health than women who occupy fewer roles (Baruch, Biener, and Barnett 1987).

The integration of multiple roles is important for men as well as women; studies of the relationships between involvement in multiple roles and well-being characteristically show positive effects for both (Baruch, Biener, and Barnett 1987). Traditional notions of male involvement in work roles and female involvement in family roles are changing (Jack and Jack 1988; Thompson 1987), and both male and female administrators need to consider the importance of integrating values and fulfilling dimensions of renewal through a balance of roles rather than traditionally defined roles according to gender.

"Solutions for finding balance must be addressed individually."

Summary

The lessons learned from the literature speak less to how administrators might achieve balance and more about what should be balanced. Solutions for finding balance must be addressed individually. Certainly, no formula for success exists, and an element of imbalance could be important in our lives. But administrative balance should consist of more than viewing work and everything else in a dichotomous relationship. Administrators might consider balancing their values, opportunities for renewal, the roles one plays, and the context in which one lives. Integrating these dimensions can lead to solutions to the problem of imbalance in an administrator's life.

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